

Remarks

Claim Status

Claims 1-90 were originally presented for examination in this application. An Office action was issued on November 22, 2004, rejecting all claims. In response, Applicants filed an Amendment and Response on March 22, 2005, in which claims 1, 10, 11, 15, 24, 25, 29, 38, 39, 43, 44, 52, 53, 59, 67, 68, 74, 83, 84 and 90 were amended and claims 37, 51, 66 and 82 were cancelled. A subsequent Office action was issued on June 14, 2005, maintaining the rejections of the prior action. In response to the June 14, 2005 action, Applicants filed an Amendment and Response on September 14, 2005, in which claims 1, 15, 29, 43, 44, 59, 74 and 90 were amended and claims 9, 11, 12, 23, 25, 26, 37, 39, 40, 51, 53, 54, 66, 68, 69, 82, 84 and 85 were cancelled. A Notice of Allowance was issued on November 4, 2005, indicating that claims 1-8, 1, 13-22, 27-36, 38, 41-50, 52, 55-65, 67, 70-81, 83 and 86-90 as presented in the September 14, 2005, amendment were allowable. Due a PTO oversight, a Supplemental Notice of Allowance was mailed on December 6, 2005, in which claim 24 was added to the list of allowed claims. A Second Supplemental Notice of Allowance was issued on January 9, 2006, documenting certain Examiner Amendments entered to correct minor discrepancies in the claims.

Post-Allowance Amendment

Applicants have added new dependent claims 91-114. Support for the new claims can be found throughout the specification, including at least at line numbers 31-33 of page 4 of the originally filed application. No new matter has been added. Applicants submit that these amendments are needed for proper protection of the invention, and, as they include only dependent claims that add further limitations on previously allowed independent claims, the examination of these claims will not require any substantial amount of additional work on the part of the Patent Office. Applicants therefore respectfully request the entry of the above-noted amendments pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.312.


Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that, in light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, claims 1-8, 1, 13-22, 24, 27-36, 38, 41-50, 52, 55-65, 67, 70-81, 83 and 86-114 are in condition for allowance, and requests that application proceed to issue. If, in the Examiner's opinion, a telephonic interview would expedite the favorable prosecution of the present application, the undersigned attorney would welcome the opportunity to discuss any outstanding issues and to work with the Examiner toward placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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